



# MARICOPA COUNTY

## ANALYSIS OF SENATE REVIEW

### Envelopes (EchoMail Report)

#### Facts About Maricopa County Signature Verification

Maricopa County has had "no excuse" early voting since 1992. In the 2020 General Election, over 90 percent of voters cast an early ballot. Maricopa County has a rigorous signature verification process. All ballot affidavit envelopes require a signature that is checked against a known signature on the official voter registration file. The Elections Department has strong internal controls and tracking methods for ballot security. Only verified ballots are counted, but we report all uncounted ballots.

#### 100% VERIFIED

All mail-in ballot signatures are reviewed by trained staff.



#### REVIEWED

100% manager review of all questioned signatures or blank envelopes.



#### DOUBLE CHECKED

A 2% daily audit of all confirmed signatures before any ballot is counted.

The accuracy and completeness of Maricopa County's signature verification process was confirmed in court (*Ward v. Jackson*). The Arizona Supreme Court affirmed the lower court ruling, "conclude[ing], unanimously, that...the challenge fails to present any evidence of 'misconduct,' 'illegal votes' or that the Biden Electors 'did not in fact receive the highest number of votes for office,' let alone establish any degree of fraud or a sufficient error rate that would undermine the certainty of the election results." (Ariz. S. Ct., December 9, 2020)

#### ECHOMAIL REPORT RESPONSES

#### ANALYSIS

#### Faulty Claim: Duplicate Early Ballot Envelope Images & Not Reported in Canvass (pg. 14)

Maricopa County only counts one ballot per eligible voter. The canvass is designed to report ballots, not envelopes. The Senate's contractor did not understand that Maricopa County may scan an envelope multiple times as a voter "cures" a signature issue or signs a blank envelope. Early ballot envelopes are NOT opened until a signature is verified.

#### Verified and Approved Stamp

For envelopes with blank or questionable signatures, we log on the physical envelope all the contact and verification methods used to reach the voter. If a signature issue is "cured" by the voter, staff stamp the envelope using the "Verified and Approved MCTEC" stamp, and the envelope is scanned again.

17,126  
duplicate  
envelopes

**Analysis: There may be multiple pictures of an envelope, but only one ballot is counted per voter.**

#### Faulty Claim: Early Ballots Counted with Blank Signatures and Scribbles on Envelopes (Pg. 14-15)

When an envelope image is blank or a signature is questioned, staff first look at the physical envelope. In some cases, the voter has signed elsewhere on the envelope. If there is truly no signature on the envelope or the signature is questioned, Maricopa County works to contact voters to "cure" the issue. Once verified, these envelopes are stamped and rescanned. Only after this process is the envelope opened and the ballot counted.

2,580  
scribbled  
signatures

Additionally, some voters have signatures that are an 'x' or another mark. In these instances, the official signature on file confirms that mark. These may be voters with visual impairments, or who have had a stroke or other medical condition that would impair their ability to sign the envelope. In most cases, these voters are supported by bipartisan Special Election Boards trained in this area.

1,919  
blank or  
likely blank  
envelopes

**Analysis: The County reviews the image and physical packet to determine a valid signature. Questioned signatures and blank envelopes are cured by the voter before the envelope is opened or counted.**

#### Faulty Claim: Signature Verification Was Not as Rigorous in 2020, Compared to 2016 (pg. 15)

The increase in the number of cured signatures as compared to 2016 is a result of a law passed in 2019, that allows voters five business days after Election Day to cure a questioned signature. The law also requires that blank envelopes must be signed by the voter no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day. As Maricopa County planned for a large number of early ballots dropped off on Election Day, combined with the new curing law, the Elections Department hired 40 additional staff to work Oct. 29-Nov. 10. These employees were specifically assigned to contact voters with questioned signatures. Maricopa County is committed to following state law and helping people vote.

Less  
rigorous  
verification  
process

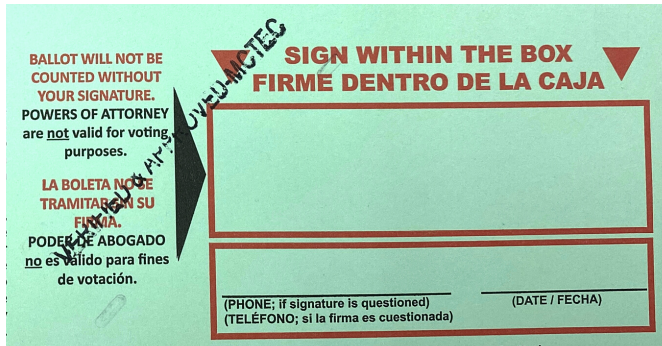
**Analysis: The decrease in early ballots not being counted was directly due to a law passed in 2019.**



# MARICOPA COUNTY ANALYSIS OF SENATE REVIEW September 26 EchoMail Letter

## Facts About Maricopa County Binary Image Format

The image on the left is a demonstration of what the physical envelope looks like without a binary scan. When returned, the envelope is scanned using a high-speed binary format (right image). Any filled area on that binary scan is "hollowed out" and only shows the outline of the shape or words. While the "verified and approved" stamp is used after a rigorous verification process, it appears to be behind the "hollowed out" arrow because it is stamped over the black and red arrows.



## ECHOMAIL LETTER RESPONSES

## ANALYSIS

### Faulty Claim: Compressed Images Reduce Signature Verification Quality (Sept. 26)

There are no such things as "pre-compression" envelope images. All envelopes are scanned using a binary image format. This process reduces the file image size, while actually improving the resolution for these high-speed scanned images. This is the only image taken of the envelope. Staff can use that image or review the physical envelope to verify a signature.

#### Binary Envelope Pictures

Early ballot envelope images captured are binary (consistent with nearly every high speed mail sorter in the world). The middle part of images are "hollowed out" to make it more readable to machines, improve speed and reduce file size. Because the "verified and approved" stamp is black, if it is placed over any filled area (black or red), that piece of the stamp would also be hollowed out.

#### Access to Envelope Images and Security

Envelope images are received through a Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) process. No modifications are ever made to the original envelope images. The signature verification program only allows staff to view the signature. No changes could be made to alter it.

#### Non-Traditional Envelopes

There are alternate format affidavit envelopes that do not undergo the traditional inbound scan process because they are not returned in the standard "envelope" format. Those include ballots returned from military and overseas voters, and large print and braille ballots. There were a total of 9,643 of these affidavit images provided to the Senate to accompany the traditional digital images. While we don't use these images to verify signatures, they are scanned for record keeping purposes.

**Analysis: The binary format reduces the file image size, while actually improving the resolution for these high-speed scanned images. No images are altered in this process.**

Compressed  
images  
reduced  
signature  
quality